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North Vietnam: Hanoi may be having some trouble with its military recruiting efforts.

An authoritative North Vietnamese editorial on 15 December reveals that Hanoi once again is trying to improve the popular response to army recruiting. In calling for education of the people in "love of country" and the "great requirement of the battlefield," the editorial suggests that there has been some slippage in programs to round up military manpower for duty in South Vietnam. The editorial comes on the heels of a special conference of the army's political department earlier this month. The conference concentrated on measures to improve the army's image among the populace and also implied that recruiting efforts have sagged lately.

During the past year the regime has put special emphasis on programs to ensure that the army has a plentiful supply of qualified and well-motivated manpower. Unusual attention has been focused on state benefits for disabled veterans and military dependents, presumably to help alleviate some of the problems that make men reluctant to serve in the army.

An even more difficult problem for Hanoi, however, is how to overcome the growing realization in the North of the dangers and hardships that Communist forces in South Vietnam must suffer. The return of thousands of wounded from southern battlefields, in particular during the past year and a half, probably has had a profound impact. The accounts of the real situation in South Vietnam undoubtedly have contributed to the growing problems of desertion and draft dodging in North Vietnam during the past year.

The evidence to date does not suggest that Hanoi is having difficulty fulfilling its draft quotas. The government's instruments of control almost certainly are capable of providing the raw

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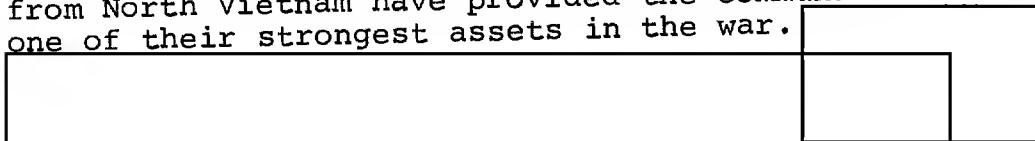
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manpower needed by the army, if necessary through reliance on stronger coercive measures. There have been recurring indications in Hanoi media during the past year of nagging morale deficiencies in the military. Appeals for heightened militancy are also a part of the general post-Ho ideological improvement campaign.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Hanoi is focusing increased attention on problems of morale and motivation among those segments of the population it must rely on most to carry on the war in the South. In the past, well-disciplined and indoctrinated troops from North Vietnam have provided the Communists with one of their strongest assets in the war.



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Czechoslovakia: Prague has revived another repressive policy from its Stalinist past--strict state control of education.

A draft bill rescinding the autonomy granted the universities in 1966 is expected to become law on 1 January 1970. It has passed through the appropriate parliamentary committees and is now on the floor of the Federal Assembly. Under this legislation, the Czech and Slovak ministers of education will be empowered to appoint and recall all academic administrators and professors. They will also be authorized to create, abolish, or reorganize educational and scientific institutions.

A plan to intensify political indoctrination within the academic community is also included in the law, suggesting that political reliability will again become a prerequisite in hiring teachers and in admitting students to the universities. These orthodox measures are further signs of the Husak leadership's determination to assert its authority over those sectors of society that in the past harbored opposition.

At the same time, the leadership seems to be attempting to convince the population that such controls are temporary and will be relaxed after a period of stability. Rude Pravo, the principal party daily, has drawn a parallel between the present situation in Czechoslovakia and the Hungarian "solution" after the 1956 uprising. The article coincided with the arrival in Prague of Hungarian party chief Kadar, whom the Czechoslovak people regard as the most progressive leader in the Soviet bloc.

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Romania: Bucharest is attempting to put a democratic facade on the proceedings of the National Assembly.

At the 17 December session, questions were raised from the floor during Premier Maurer's reading of a draft law revising some of the functions of the Council of Ministers. Even President Ceausescu took part in the discussion and urged the re-drafting of one section. This is part of the Romanian leadership's efforts to induce some semblance of debate during the parliamentary proceedings.

Ceausescu is also encouraging discussions in all government bodies as a way of enhancing his image as a fair-minded leader. He has yet to allow a debate, however, on any issue that he considers vital to Romanian security, or that would help the opposition forces attack his policies.



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Southern Yemen: Antiregime sentiment may be on the rise.

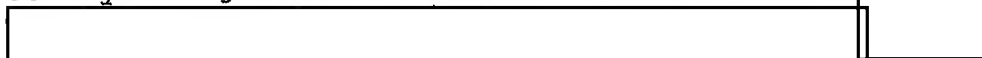
The extent of the army's defeat in the border squabble with Saudi forces is becoming known in spite of government efforts to portray the incident as a great victory. This probably has further disillusioned those Southern Yemenis already displeased with other radical actions of the ruling group within the National Front.

The government's dismissal of the commander of the army earlier this week will alienate his tribal and military supporters. It may also make him sympathetic toward a dissenting group reportedly headed by the prime minister, who has been critical of certain policy decisions of the National Front.



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Dissatisfaction and plotting are endemic in Southern Yemen, however, and it is questionable whether this latest surge of discontent will lead to any changes in the radical ruling group.



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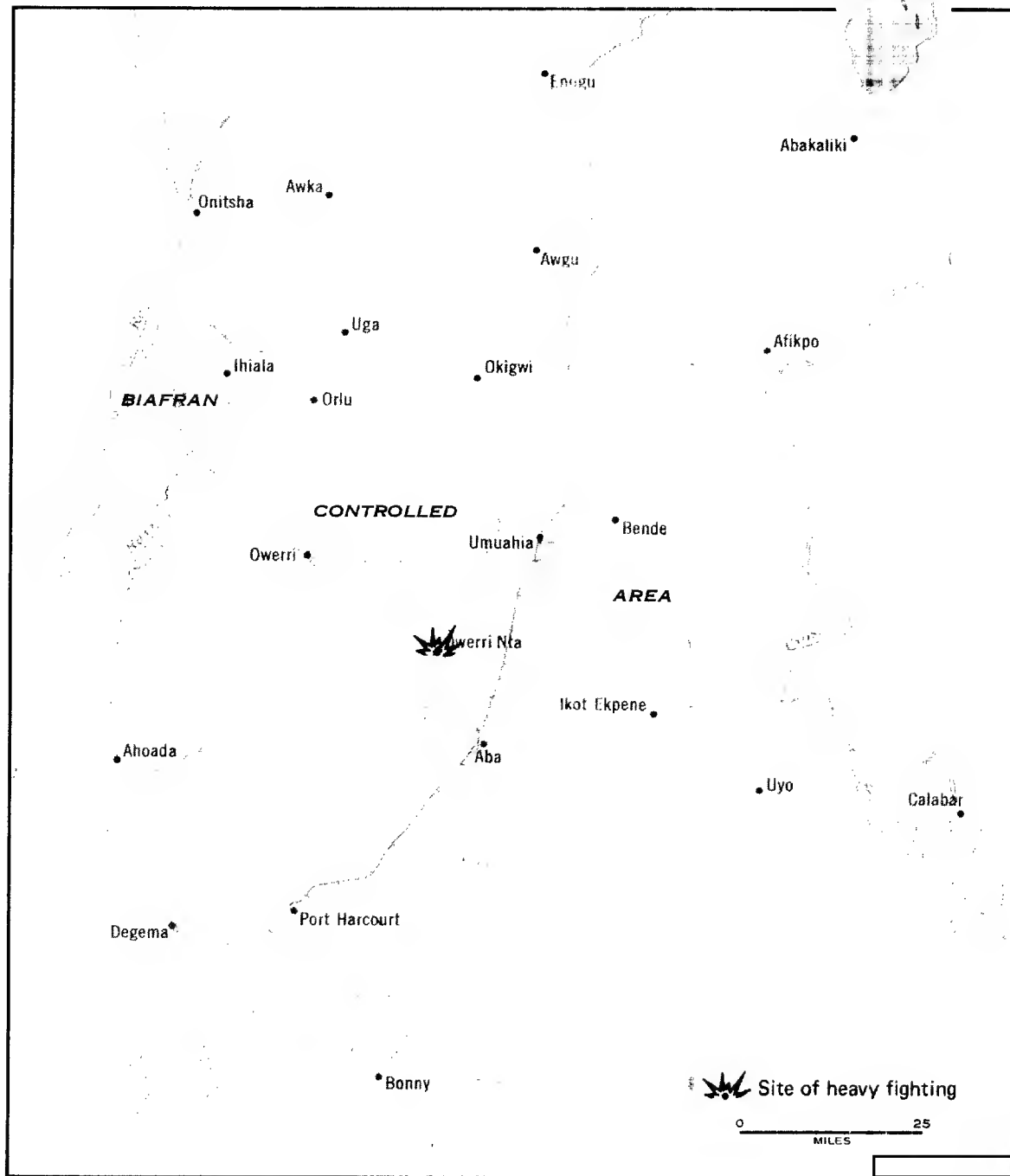
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SOUTHEASTERN NIGERIA



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Nigeria: Federal troops have made further inroads on Biafra's southern front and are keeping up their pressure on the secessionists.

Federal troops have advanced from the town of Aba toward the important road-junction town of Owerri, where they are meeting stiff Biafran resistance. There is also heavy fighting in other areas of the southern front.

These federal gains do not greatly alter the military situation, although they are psychologically important to the Nigerians. The capture of Owerri would be a significant military victory, but at present the Biafrans seem well entrenched there.

Meanwhile, Emperor Haile Selassie's latest attempt to get both sides together for talks has failed because of a procedural problem. A Biafran delegation that had been in Addis Ababa departed yesterday after the Emperor publicly acknowledged that the negotiations would be held under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The OAU has consistently backed federal Nigeria, and the Biafrans have therefore adamantly refused to negotiate under such circumstances. The Biafrans scored a propaganda victory, however, by showing up and appearing anxious to negotiate while the Nigerians delayed even sending a delegation pending procedural clarification. (Map)

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Panama: Changes in the Provisional Junta Government appear to be imminent, with civilians likely to assume top positions.

Although the junta has only been a rubber stamp for Torrijos, the general was displeased by the willingness of its two members, Colonels Pinilla and Urrutia, to go along with the coup attempt, and they seem to be on the way out. [There are strong indications that Demetrio Lakas will be appointed president of the junta today. Torrijos has promised an all-civilian government by January and is also considering naming Arturo Sucre to the junta.] Both men are personal friends of Torrijos and now hold middle-level administration posts.

The appointment of these men would satisfy Torrijos' desire to surround himself with men of unquestioned loyalty. In addition, Torrijos may believe that domestic and international advantages would result from giving the government less of a military image.

Although the country is now quiet, extreme leftists may try to stir things up. They plan to initiate sabotage activities within the next few days [redacted] in the belief that the Guard may blame such actions on the followers of Colonel Sanjur, who led the coup attempt. [redacted]

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Costa Rica: The campaign for the presidential elections on 1 February will degenerate into a mud-slinging contest after the holiday truce ends.

The opposition National Liberation Party (PLN), disturbed over the effectiveness of the government coalition's smear tactics, has decided to respond in kind. President Trejos' National Unification (UN) party has run a well-financed propaganda barrage aimed principally at tarring PLN candidate Jose Figueres with the Communist brush. The UN quotes old speeches of Figueres and documents issued by radical elements of the PLN to characterize the party and its leader as Communist or at least Marxist.

Despite former president Figueres' long record of anti-Communism, the UN charges appear to have gained some public acceptance. Figueres had to dissociate himself from several PLN documents, a move that strained his own party's already fragile unity. The PLN is quoting prominent US political figures in an effort to dramatize the similarity in their philosophy and that of Figueres.

The small and apathetic attendance at a series of public rallies, however, has convinced the PLN that counterattack rather than defense is in order. Figueres plans to charge that Communist influence surrounds UN standard bearer Mario Echandi, and he also will point to one of the UN vice presidential candidates as linked with the extreme left.

With the legislature recessed until after the elections, the Socialist Action Party, a Communist front group, has survived rightist attempts to have it outlawed. This has drawn more attention to Communism, already a focal point in the campaign. Extreme rightists have engaged in minor violence protesting Communist participation in Costa Rican politics. Further incidents can be expected as the campaign becomes more heated in January.

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NOTES

USSR - Communist China: First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov's return to Moscow last Sunday, ostensibly for the Supreme Soviet session, may be a prelude to one final Soviet effort to achieve some progress at the deadlocked border talks before relieving him for other duties. Moscow officials have been telling Western newsmen that Kuznetsov will soon return to Peking, but they have left the impression that he will be replaced as head of the delegation by a lesser official if no progress is achieved. Reports have been circulating for several weeks that Moscow wants to lower its representation at the talks, which have been going on for two months, apparently feeling that little more can be accomplished at the deputy foreign minister level. [REDACTED]

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USSR: The recent identification of V. S. Tikunov as the USSR's chargé ad interim in Bucharest is another indication that politburo member Shelepin has had only limited success in helping his most trusted lieutenants, several of whom were demoted during the 1967-1968 period. A Romanian news agency announcement on 8 December contained the first news of Tikunov's fate since N. A. Shchelokov assumed command of the USSR's domestic police shortly after it was recentralized in mid-1966.

That reorganization not only eliminated the Russian Republic MVD (then MOOP), which Tikunov had headed, but also bypassed him as the man who appeared to be the most logical candidate for the top post in the new ministry. Tikunov's position at the Soviet Embassy in Bucharest is several rungs down the ladder from his earlier assignments. [REDACTED]

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Hungary - West Germany: Talks relating to a long-range economic agreement between the two countries have been scheduled for next February, according to the West German trade mission in Budapest. Prior reports from Bonn had noted that the Hungarians were trying to arrange a meeting before the end of 1969. The delay until February will enable both sides to have a clearer picture of what progress may have been made in the current Polish discussions with the West Germans. It will also obviate the need for tactical shifts to the line developing in Warsaw.

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Turkey: Turkish students almost certainly will organize anti-US demonstrations during the current three-day visit of five US naval ships to Izmir, [redacted] The governor of Izmir anticipates that any such demonstrations will be nonviolent, but he is concerned that extremists may try to provoke incidents with US sailors on shore leave. Students in Ankara and Istanbul, already striking to protest various academic grievances, may send delegations to Izmir. As during past fleet visits, however, local security forces should be able to control the situation unless there is a substantial influx of agitators, in which case army units might have to be called in.

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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES

The United States Intelligence Board on 18 December 1969 approved the following national intelligence estimates:

NIE 60/70-2-69 "Nationalism and Antiforeign Sentiment in Black Africa"

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NIE 97-1-69 "Prospects for Peru"

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